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SIX YEARS in HAMMOCK LAND

RALPH J. WHITE

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HAMMOCK LAND INDIANS

SIX YEARS IN HAMMOCK LAND

An historical sketch of the Lutheran Church in British Guiana, with observations and experiences of the Missionary of the United Lutheran Church in that land.

BY

REV. RALPH J. WHITE



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FOREWORD

Six years in Hammock Land is an attempt on the part of the author to give to the Church an historical sketch of a Lutheran Congregation that has endured for one hundred and seventy-eight years in our sister continent, in the midst of difficulties and discouragements that would surely have overwhelmed it had not God had some purpose in its preservation.

Six Years in Hammock Land also contains a sketch of the Ituni Lutheran Mission, which has the distinction of being the only mission of The United Lutheran Church to the aboriginal Indians of the Western Hemisphere.

Six Years in Hammock Land also contains such incidents and observations connected with the work of your missionary as have seemed of interest to those with whom he has come in contact during his furlough periods. These are now put forth in this form so that they may be available to a

larger number in our beloved Zion.

We have chosen to call British Guiana "Hammock Land" because it is the home of the hammock. The hammock is a comfortable bed and one that can be utilized by traveler and explorer, by balata bleeder and timber worker. A man of great experience once said to me: "The hammock is the curse of the River," meaning that it was so handy and comfortable that much valuable time was wasted lounging in it that should be more profitably employed. While this may be true, nevertheless, the hammock is one of the great blessings to people in these parts. It makes a cool bed for a needed siesta and a comfortable resting place after a day's hard work. I consider it one of the notable inventions of the aboriginal Indian.

We trust that Six Years in Hammock Land may prove informing to our Lutheran people and help in some degree to direct the attention of our Church to the great continent to the southeast that has so long been neglected by the Churches of the United States.

That our attention is needed in that direc-

tion is evident when you consider that the United Lutheran Church in America has only two missions and two ordained missionaries in a continent five thousand miles in length and three thousand and five hundred miles in width,—one in the Argentine and one in British Guiana.

Our Mission in British Guiana is our oldest and largest mission in South America, and probably the least known among our constituency. All of which is an argument for such a study of our Mission Field as I have here attempted to give.

It is estimated that there are forty-seven millions of aboriginal Indians in South America and ours is one of the few efforts to reach those lovable people with the Gospel.

That this sketch may be blessed of God to the quickening of our interest in the South American Field is the one prayer of your missionary to British Guiana, the Land of the Hammock.

RALPH J. WHITE.



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Six Years In Hammock Land

"Lo our log-book! Thus once did we live
In the zones of the South; thus we traversed the seas."

CHAPTER I.

Scenes and Experiences Enroute to Hammock Land.

When first we visit a country the charm of novelty is upon every feature. Things that soon become commonplace then stand out with clearness and distinction. The first impressions of a land therefore have an unique value as long as they deal with those features that can be taken in at a glance.

Our voyage from the States to "Hammock Land" first impressed us as a journey from snow to roses. For on the morning of our departure from our home in Ohio the earth was covered with more than a foot of snow. The trees were no longer barren

and stark, but every branch and twig was laden with a pure wealth of cottony white, which, catching up the early morning rays, glistened and sparkled as though covered with diamonds of the clearest water. While at this end of the journey we were ushered out of the hot tropical sun into a cool house decorated with roses, lilies, and orchids, while on one side of the Church were bushes loaded with large, pink, cabbage roses.

On the last day of December, 1915, we arrived in New York to take the boat for South America. We were especially interested in the different ways in which people were celebrating the passing of the old year. There was much revelry. In the hotels there was drinking and dancing all night. One large hotel boasted, glorying in its shame, that even the office cat was drunk. But not all, nor even a large per cent. of the people of New York were thus turning a solemn season into an excuse for debauchery. At midnight we stood on Madison Square and joined our voices with a great multitude in hymns of praise as Old Fifteen passed out and Young Sixteen came in.

On the evening of the 5th of January we left the dock in East River on the steamship Guiana. For two days we were seasick. After we had finished with this inconvenience we thoroughly enjoyed the beauties of sea and sky and the balmy zephyrs of the Gulf Stream. On the sixth day we came to anchor off the island of St. Thomas and caught our first glimpse of West Indian life.

In the last six years it has been our privilege to visit twelve of the West Indian Islands belonging to the Danish, the French, and the English.

Our American Church is especially interested in the Danish Islands, for they have since become the American Virgin Islands. In these islands the Lutheran faith was the State Religion and our United Lutheran Church now has charge of this work.

Upon our arrival at St. Thomas we called on the Lutheran pastor and were cordially received. With him we attended a temperance meeting and later we had the privilege of speaking to his Sunday school and observing other departments of the work both

at this place and at Fredericksted on the island of St. Croix.

When the agitation grew concerning the acquisition of these islands by the United States, we suggested both to Reverend Bergh and Reverend Larson the desirability of those churches seeking affiliation with the General Council because of the proximity of their work in Porto Rico. It was very gratifying to learn that that was the intended course of action. We have noted with pleasure the splendid response of the United Lutheran Church in fostering the work in these islands.

It was inevitable that our Lutheran Church in these islands should suffer in prestige by disestablishment and by the withdrawal of so many Danish Lutherans from the islands. However, if we combine with our Lutheran ideals the characteristic progressiveness of American Lutheranism, there is no reason why the Churches should not recover their energy and prestige in a few years.

St. Thomas was noted for its production of bay rum. When we first visited the

island one quart could be purchased for twenty-five cents. In the West Indies bay rum was not so much a toilet requisite as a beverage. I have heard men say that they preferred bay rum for its "flavor" and "kick" above the regular rum. We were told that, during the war, many of our sailors stationed at these islands acquired the bay-rum habit, thus defeating the good intentions of Secretary Daniels.

We were personally very much interested in the two French islands of Guadeloupe and Martinique, because these were the only places we had ever visited where the Romish Church had the field to itself, and because on Martinique are located the ruins of St. Pierre, and because this island was the birthplace of the Empress Josephine.

On one trip we were detained for four days at Guadeloupe. Early one morning in June we came in sight of the islands, for what is generally known as Guadeloupe is really two islands separated by a narrow channel four miles long and known as Riviere Salee. The islands are known as Grande Terre and Basse Terre.

We anchored just off the town of Pointe a' Pitre with Grande Terre to our right and Basse Terre to our left. From the deck of the steamer we had a fine panorama of the two islands and the tiny islets that dot La Grande Bay. While these islands lie so close together as to be known as one, nevertheless their topography is very dissimilar.

Grande Terre is flat and shows a very slight elevation above the sea. It is covered with green verdure and is fringed with greenish brown cocoanut trees. It lies sweet and beautiful in the clear tropical atmosphere.

Basse Terre, on the other hand, presents a remarkable contrast. It is mountainous, cloud-covered, and mist-enshrouded. The clouds so press down on the mountains as to give them the aspect of a high plateau. And the mists so press down over the sides of the mountains and into the valleys as to impress one with some impending doom. It is told that only occasionally at the end of the year is it possible to see the tops of any of the mountains. During our four days'

visit we could at no time discover the sky-line of more than one-third of the island.

Prolonged Visit:

Our stop at this island was prolonged because of the difficulties in discharging the cargo. This experience gave a real insight into labor conditions in the West Indies. We arrived on Saturday and since it was the end of the week we could not expect the porters to begin a new job. Of course on Sunday you could not expect more than a few to work, even for double pay. Monday was a Holy Day so no good Romanist would work. Tuesday was "the day after" and few were able to work. However, the delay did not much inconvenience the passengers. Of course there are always a few who are bored to death at everything. But the brides and grooms found it only a pleasant prolongation of their honeymoon. And never will they find a more beautiful moon to look down upon their love than in the almost day-like radiance of those tropical nights, with the southern cross standing clear and glorious like a wayside shrine.

Excursions;

There were excursions to the town. "Nosings around" we began to call them. Could we have left our olfactory sense behind, the town would have charmed with its quaint, dingy, exotic appearance. We remembered that it was French and that it was the tropics, and making every allowance we hurried on past the abodes of men and wandered away from the town. Our path led up a winding road between bananas, cocoanuts, and other vegetation growing in wild profusion, until, passing under some tamarinds and flamboyants, we came to a promontory overlooking the sea. Here the road was richly carpeted with crimson fallen petals and a crimson canopy of beautiful flowers stretched over us with its occasional gleams here and there of bright green leaves through which we caught glimpses of the clear blue sky dotted with white fleecy clouds. In such a setting the town, the sugar factory, the harbor with its rum and sugar-laden schooners presented a picture well worth remembering. Distance lent the greater enchantment for the odors remained in the valley.



New Amsterdam Church



New Amsterdam Manse



THE REV. RALPH J. WHITE



ST. PAUL'S MISSION HOUSE

Swimming Party:

There were sailing parties along the sparkling bay and swimming parties from one of the small islands. And even though our hosts spoke little English and our party spoke little French, yet there was an abundance of hospitality, cordiality, and conversation. Some of our hosts had just returned from New York. They had found it a very disappointing place. However, we need not feel too badly over their disappointment as it was caused, as far as I could make out, by the poor quality of the New York rum.

Roman Service;

Sunday morning a few of us attended service at the Roman Catholic Cathedral. In the party was a young lady Romanist from Boston. As she would not believe our description as to the kind of service she would see, it was diverting to observe her astonishment at the Beadle with his cocked hat, his red suit and white stockings, and his staff with which he repeatedly tapped the floor. The beards of the priests were a matter of great concern to her, as well as

the location in the Church of the Governor with his staff and his family, and the young ladies collecting the offerings. As the service lasted for two hours and was all in Latin and French our attention was bound to stray. We looked in vain for the creole belles for which the island had one time been famous. The only truly picturesque people were the black mammies with their long trailing dresses of brilliant hues called "douillette," and their Madras turbans of bright yellow. It is interesting to know that the amazingly brilliant sulphur yellow of these turbans is not the result of dyeing, but that they are all painted by hand. The making up of the turban is called "tying a head" and a prettily folded turban "a head well tied."

From Guadeloupe we passed on to Martinique, the birthplace of the beautiful Josephine, the wife of Napoleon. In the public square of the Fort de France is a large statue of her, which is considered the finest piece of sculpture in the West Indies.

The ruins of St. Pierre constitute the most remarkable sight on this island. This was one time a beautiful and prosperous city

with 30,000 inhabitants. Now, along with about half of the island, it is lying in ruins, buried beneath the ashes that burst forth from Mt. Pele on May 8, 1902. Of all the inhabitants in St. Pierre on that fateful day, only one escaped immediate death, and he was a condemned criminal in a cell. Even his escape was not for long, for he died from shock two days after he was rescued.

Only two of the seventeen vessels lying in the roadstead escaped entire destruction. A few of the crew in the hold and on the forward deck of the Roraima escaped, the only passenger to escape being a child who was in the arms of her nurse when the flames broke forth from the mountain. The nurse fell, covering the child. The nurse was burned to a crisp, but the child, although horribly burned, still lived and was tenderly cared for by the American relief forces, and is now a charming young matron of Barbadoes whose friendship we esteem very highly.

We have seen many records setting forth that St. Pierre was destroyed as a judgment of God because of its great wickedness. If

half that has been related about the wickedness of that beautiful and gay French city is true, it is easy to believe that her doom was just. However, as to the mind of God in the matter, we have no way of knowing. If it was a judgment of God because of wickedness, how great is the mercy of God that contrives to give a day of grace to so many wicked cities that are still upon the earth.

Having spent little more than a week in these two French islands, it would be presumptuous for me to give an estimate of the influence of the Roman Church. However, one who lived in Martinique said: "The Church remains rich and prosperous in Martinique. Of this there can be no question. But whether it continues to wield any powerful influence in the maintenance of social order is more than doubtful. A Polynesian laxity of morals among the black and colored population, and the history of race hatreds, and revolutions rising out of race hate, would indicate that neither in politics nor in ethics does the Church possess any preponderant authority."

My whole impression in the islands, whether they were Danish, or French, or English, was that religion did not touch the life and influence the conduct in any degree as religion does the lives of church members in the United States. I am persuaded that the State Church idea has a great deal to do with this; the general mixture of the races is also a contributing factor. The start under the Spanish was bad, the development has been under mercenary auspices, and the climate is not conducive to the development of sturdy morals.

To one passing this way for the first time, there is a fascination and beauty in all these islands along with sad contrasts. Azure skies, transparent waters, quaint villages, cloud-capped mountains covered with tropical vegetation, gorgeous botanical gardens, warships, boats, strange peoples, naked divers, and beggars, all pass in rapid panorama.

As we passed through the islands we heard many strange stories about the land towards which we were traveling. We were advised to return by the same boat, for

British Guiana was described as the "White Man's Grave," "The Wild Coast," a land of mosquitoes, malaria, centipedes, scorpions, and snakes. But now, after six years, we can truly say that any tourist who comes down this way and does not include this country in his itinerary is making a most serious mistake. All the points of interest in most of the islands can be seen while the boat is discharging and receiving cargo. While here in "Hammock Land," real West Indian life and the natural wonders of the great South American continent can be seen together. The wise and best instructed tourist will arrange more time for British Guiana than for all the lesser Antilles.

The Changing Scenes:

As we left Barbadoes we knew that within one day and two nights we would see with our own eyes The Land of the Hammock where our brethren in the Faith were waiting with anxious hearts for one to break the Bread of Life to them. We were to arrive in Georgetown on the morning of the 20th of January. So about six o'clock we came

on deck. Everything was now changed. No longer were we surrounded with an azure sea with white-capped waves, but the boat was making its way through muddy waters. There were no cloud-crowned mountains with tropical vegetation to delight the eye, but, instead, a low fringe of trees marked the place where dirty water left off and mud flat began. All the dismal stories that we had heard about this malaria and mosquito infested land seemed to have their verification in that first glimpse of the coast line as we journeyed through muddy waters into the Demerara River. To make matters worse, there was a heavy downpour of rain, which did not brighten the uncompromising aspect.

Georgetown:

After breakfast the rain stopped. The sun at once came out. The stevedores began to unload the cargo, and we went ashore. Passing through the customs with its mingled odors of fish, rum, and sugar, we took a carriage for the hotel. Passing from the warehouses that lined the river front, we at once entered into a broad and beautiful

street. We found Georgetown a delightful place; in fact the most beautiful tropical city we had yet visited. The streets were wide and many of them lined with stately palms which formed natural colonnades of great beauty and cool shade. The houses were built on pillars, lifting them about eight feet above the ground, and were surrounded by beautiful gardens of tropical plants. The houses were all large wooden structures with galleries across the front, faced with latticed windows, thus giving the delights of outdoors while shielding from the sun's glare.

Botanical Gardens;

We visited the Botanical Gardens with their experimental grounds, beautifully grouped tropical plants, and houses of ferns and orchids. The late ex-President Roosevelt declared that it was the finest tropical garden that he had seen in all his travels.

Sea Wall;

We also visited the Sea Wall. This defense from the sea has been made into a fashionable promenade. Here at all times

a delightful sea breeze can be enjoyed. Here bright-eyed children play under the care of their dusky nurses. Here the band plays and the elite see and are seen. That night as we got under our mosquito netting to sleep we felt that this land had many redeeming features, although it was not altogether a land of roses.

The Last Lap:

It seemed as though we had just fallen to sleep after our busy first day in Hammock Land, when our door opened and a black servant brought us our "coffee." After coffee and a cold shower we were ready for our second day. Soon we drove to the train for the last lap of the journey.

The trip from Georgetown to New Amsterdam is an unforgetable one. The train is a dingy little affair. I persist in still calling it dingy although a local scribe took me to account for saying so six years ago. It takes three hours and a half to go the sixty miles to Rosignal and then more than half an hour before we are ferried across the Berbice River to the town of New Amster-

dam. As we stepped upon the landing at New Amsterdam we were received by a delegation from the Church and were greeted by the ringing of the Church bell. As we entered the Church the congregation sang a hymn of welcome. After a few words of greeting and a prayer of thanksgiving we proceeded to the temporary manse.

During our first week there were nine services at the Church, the last being a service of general welcome from the community at which the Mayor of the town presided and different ministers spoke, along with one of the Trustees and one of the Vestrymen. It was really a very strenuous week and the people hardly realized how terribly worn out we were with so many services amid such strange surroundings and in such tropical heat, less than a month after we had left our snow-covered home in Ohio. It was not discourtesy that led us to write at the time, "We learned that we were welcome and knew that we were weary." It was all very strange. The people, the food, the customs were strange. We were indeed strangers in a strange land.

CHAPTER II.

A Brief History and Description of the Country.

Some men buy an excursion ticket, rush through a country, and then write a sensational book about its people and their morals. Should they write up a Sunday school convention they would make it lurid. Such an one in the person of a Minneapolis cleric (?) slandered the islands and British Guiana in a recent book. It was properly labeled:

"Of slandrous lies, a tissue, on our harmless native land
By a sort of parson-thing from 'Over There.'"

We, however, are writing these chapters for the sole purpose of informing our Lutheran people about the Lutheran Church located in this Colony. And, in order that its history and workings may be understood, we shall give a short review of the history of the country and its peoples.

British Guiana is made up of three counties, Essequibo, Demerara, and Berbice. It is known in trade circles as Demerara. All three counties were at one time separate colonies and were all originally settled by the Dutch. The Spaniards never made a settlement in Guiana on account of the hostility of the cannibals. In 1595 Sir Walter Raleigh directed attention to the Guianas by his ill-fated expedition in search of El Dorado, the mythical City of Gold.

The first settlement was made in Essequibo by the Dutch in 1620, in Berbice in 1624, and in Demerara in 1745. In 1781 the three settlements were won by the English, the next year by the French, and the next year they were again restored to the Dutch who held them until 1796 when they were again won by the English. In 1802 they were again restored to the Dutch and in 1803 the English again came into possession and they have remained a British colony from that date.

The Colony is governed by a semi-representative Government. There is an Executive Council, a Court of Policy, and a Com-

bined Court. The Governor is the head of each body and dominates all three. The Electives have hardly more than the right of debate. Theoretically they control the purse of the Colony, but actually they only add to the Government Estimates. While the British Government has not done much for the development of the material resources of the Colony, they have administered the Government in an equitable manner for all the races represented here, and that is no insignificant task.

We are personally of the opinion that a Crown Colony Government would be the best for British Guiana. The semi-representative system has not developed leaders of a type that would encourage giving the Electives more power. Neither does the practical politics encourage one to think that the time is ripe for the Government to be constituted on a popular basis.

As British Guiana is divided politically into three counties, so it is divided topographically into three belts. Along the sea shore and extending inland for from ten to twenty miles is a mud flat which has given



the country the name "The Land of Mud."

Upon this flat the great bulk of the population of the colony lives. Here are found the cities and villages, the large flourishing sugar plantations and the extensive rice cultivation. This is the only portion of this great Colony that the casual visitor sees. But in many ways this is the most unpromising part of the whole colony. This flat is below the level of the sea at high tide, and must be protected by extensive sea-defenses. Here the mosquito and its accompanying malaria are very prevalent. Surrounding this mud flat is the muddy ocean, and indenting it are the large muddy rivers, all rendered so by the muddy currents that sweep from the mouth of the Amazon to the mouth of the Orinoco. And yet, because of its great fertility, the human species much prefers this muddy strip to the delightful interior.

Directly behind this mud flat is a belt of higher land, rising slightly above the level of the sea and probably the sea coast in former ages. It was upon this belt that the Dutch first established their villages and

plantations of sugar, coffee, and cocoa. All that is now left to mark these places are heaps of bricks, the names of the plantations, and here and there an old tomb beneath which lies the dust of some old-time adventurer from Holland. The forests have taken over the once fruitful fields. Underneath giant crab trees, mora and bullet wood, can still be traced the planted beds. And some of the cocoa trees are still producing a crop of Theobroma. In this belt the population is scattered sparsely along the banks of the rivers and creeks. A little farming and cattle raising is carried on by these people but most of their time is spent bleeding balata and squaring timbers.

Behind this belt are found the great natural wonders of the Colony. Lofty mountains, rushing cataracts, mighty falls, dizzy heights, wondrous valleys, and limitless savannahs. Here are scattered herds of cattle, a few ranchers, and the bulk of the aboriginal Indians. Here diamonds and gold are found in considerable abundance, and it is here that the future greatness of the colony is to be secured.

There are four major industries in the Colony: sugar, rice, cattle, and timber. The greatest is sugar. Sugar has been and still is the greatest factor in the life of the colony. Sugar brought the European, the African, the East Indian, the Chinese, and the Portuguese to these shores. Sugar has made possible the rice industry, has created the demand for the local timbers that has kept the saw mills going, and up to the present time most of the available cattle have been raised on the front lands of the sugar estates. Some local people speak about the sugar industry as though it were a monster and they would be glad to see it crippled, but the fact remains that the prosperity of the colony is to be found in the prosperity of sugar.

The day may come when other industries can stand alone. But it is not yet. Sugar is King.

A sugar estate is an interesting place and the successful manager must be a man of considerable ability. He controls to a very large extent the welfare of hundreds of people. He is both a planter and a manu-



THE STRAND, NEW AMSTERDAM



THE KAIETEUR FALLS

facturer. He has control of the housing and the handling of people of various races. Their recreations, education, and religion are matters of care to him. At his table the overseers eat, and their time is at his disposal. I consider his position one of the most responsible in the whole colony. With him lie vast opportunities for either good or evil. His example is far more potent than he himself often imagines.

The peoples of British Guiana have been gathered from the ends of the earth. As was stated above, sugar was responsible for this gathering of the peoples. Tropical agriculture requires a large and cheap labor supply. Africa, India, China, and Madeira, all were called upon in turn to contribute. The Chinese and Portuguese did not take kindly to agriculture and soon became the small provision and rum-shop owners of the country. The Africans and East Indians were the best agriculturists. All these people, representing great diversities of thought and feeling, are giving their contributions to the life of the colony.

We sincerely trust that out of these diver-

sities there may result a Christian community, able to solve some of the great problems engendered by race animosities. Under wise leadership it ought to be possible to work out in this colony a most interesting and helpful experiment in the association of the races. Would it be expecting too much for each race to retain its identity and yet all of them dwell together in Christian fellowship? A great deal has been done along this line by the Christian forces of the community, but much still remains to be done.

There are those in the colony who would have churches for the Blacks alone, and others who would have churches for the East Indians alone. Such procedure in this colony is not wise and would eventually set race against race and cause no end of trouble and confusion. It would be better if each Church would try to minister to all the races and bring them together in the same congregations.

Christianity has made many conquests in this Colony. When the Chinese came to this Colony they were heathen. The Anglicans carried on aggressive work among these

people and today they are nearly all Christians.

The Africans were brought here as slaves and were heathen. Today they are all at least nominally Christians.

The East Indians came to this Colony, Hindus and Mohammedans, and today thousands of them are Christians and many of them leaders in the Christian Church.

Much has been done and there still remains much to do as you will discover in making a survey of the conditions.

CHAPTER III.

Planting and Development of the Churches of British Guiana.

When the British took possession of the Colony in 1803, there were only two Churches in the country. One was the Lutheran Church in Berbice and the other a Dutch Reformed Church on Fort Island. These Churches were about one hundred miles apart; and, according to the "Local Guide of British Guiana," the services of their ministers were sacred, not to the one hundred and fifty thousand slaves which the colony then contained, but to the services of their masters.

With the entrance of the British, the Dutch Reformed ceased in the Colony, so that only the Lutheran Church can date its origin to the old Dutch times. All the English Churches were planted after British possession. The following shows the dates and purposes of their organizations.

On the occupation of the country by the

British, a chaplain attached to the garrison at Kingstown read the prayers of the Church of England in a small room in the Old Court House, which might have accommodated some thirty or forty persons. The services were not intended for the slaves and the black people used to be driven from the doors when any of them ventured to look in upon the few worshipers assembled there.

In the year 1805 a Wesleyan missionary from Dominica visited Demerara. When he informed the Governor that he had come to instruct the slaves in the principles of Christianity, he was ordered to leave.

In 1807 the London Missionary Society sent out their first missionary to this Colony at the request of a godly planter. To the London Missionary Society credit must always be given for the first successful work among the slave population of British Guiana. Their labors were heroic, and their zeal and devotion all that should mark the children of the King. This denomination has continued for one hundred and fourteen years a pious administration to the spiritual needs of the peoples of this Colony. They

are deserving of special honor as the pioneer friends of the black people.

In 1738 an unsuccessful attempt was made by the Moravians to commence a mission among the slaves. Two of their missionaries arrived in the Colony only to find no opportunity afforded them of instructing the negroes. Thereupon they removed to the interior, where they were able after surmounting many difficulties to form a flourishing Mission Settlement among the aboriginal Indians. Even there the opposition of the European Colonists pursued them. But amid a variety of both encouragements and discouragements they, and other brethren who had joined them, continued to labor on until 1765. In that year the negro slaves rose in rebellion against their masters, murdered many of the white people, and laid waste the whole colony. The rebels attacked the Indian Mission Village, the people were scattered, and the missionaries escaped to Demerara. There two died and the remainder embarked for their native country.

In 1810 a building called St. George's

Church was opened in Georgetown, in which the service was performed according to the liturgy of the Church of England as by law established.

In 1815 the Wesleyans commenced their operations in Georgetown and succeeded in establishing a Church in that place and in Mahaica.

In 1819 St. Andrew's Church for the professors of the faith of the Church of Scotland was opened in Georgetown. This Church, along with the Church of England, was intended only for the European colonists, who, during their temporary sojourn here as planters, merchants, lawyers, and doctors, all had a common interest in upholding the system of slavery and who were in no wise interested in the spiritual welfare of the slave.

In 1823 there arose an insurrection among the slaves of British Guiana. The blame for this was laid upon the Missionary activities of the London Missionary Society. In 1824 there was a movement put on foot to exclude them from the Colony and establish a "sufficient supply of safe men" of regularly or-

dained state-church clergymen. It was resolved therefore to select and endow a particular order of clergy, whose position as paid servants of the State should be a security for their good behavior. From their teachings no danger could arise to the "domestic institutions," for ministers of this description, paid allies of the Government, must always fall in with the wishes of those in power. So there was established an army of ecclesiastical police admirably fitted for the accomplishment of any arbitrary design.

Thus arose the state-church idea as it has been maintained in British Guiana. While it lost its great object in 1836 with the abolition of slavery, nevertheless, it has kept the churches of the Colony from the development of that Christian independence and generosity that should have been the fruit of more than one hundred years of church life.

As time went on other than the Anglican and Scotch churches came to receive a portion of state aid. Last year a kind of disestablishment was brought about by assigning the following amounts of interest-bear-

ing government bonds to the different churches:

The Church of England.....	$350,350
The Church of Scotland.....	87,660
The Church of Rome.....	113,210
The Wesleyan	75,000
The Moravian	6,380
The Lutheran	3,620
The Salvation Army.....	3,190
Total	$639,410

In addition to the above amounts the Churches of England, Scotland, and Rome receive this year $26,342.00, which amount is to be gradually reduced per annum until it is eliminated at the end of twenty-five years. So the Colony is still taxed over sixty thousand dollars per annum for religion, which at the end of twenty-five years will be reduced to about $32,000.00, or the five per cent. on the total bonds issued.

CHAPTER IV.

The History of the Lutheran Church in Berbice.

We now come to the history of probably the oldest Protestant Congregation on the continent of South America with the exception of the churches in Surinam.

All of South America was colonized by Roman Catholic nations with the exception of what is now British and Dutch Guiana. In all those countries the work of the Protestant Churches is now just beginning. But, in Dutch and British Guiana, there have been Protestant Churches for about two centuries. It will interest you to know about one of these churches which was organized almost two centuries ago.

The date of the organization of the Lutheran Church in Berbice is October 15, 1743. About twenty years before this a Dutch Reformed Church had been built at the mouth of the Weironie River. There had been great irregularity in the services

on account of the difficulty in getting "Predicants" at the small salary offered. So on the 21st of February, 1735, the Dutch Reformed had been constituted the State Church by an act of the Berbice Association which imposed a tax to provide a Church Fund.

On the 7th of January, 1736, Johannes Fronderdorff was appointed Predicant of Berbice. His salary was nine hundred guilders per annum, one-half cask of wine, one anchor of brandy, and free boarding for himself, wife, daughter, and maid-servant. At his recommendation a choir leader was also appointed, who was to act as sexton and schoolmaster on a salary of three hundred guilders.

It was said of this first Reformed preacher, that he was so intolerant, greedy, and quarrelsome, that the Governor was unwilling to permit him to continue at his table, so a house was built for him near the church and eight hundred guilders were allowed him in lieu of rations.

At this time, it was said that both religion and morals were at a very low standard, but

the church was well attended, and the contributions came in without much difficulty.

There were at this time a number of the colonists who held to the Unaltered Augsburg Confession. Differing from the Reformed they naturally desired to worship God according to the dictates of their own conscience. Therefore, at a meeting held at the home of one Lodewic R. Abbensetts, on the 15th of October, 1743, these Lutherans resolved to petition "The Honorable The Court of Policy," and "Their Highnesses The States General of the Netherlands," praying for the privilege of free exercise of their religion, and at the same time making application by letter to "The Reverend Consistory of Amsterdam" soliciting their aid and co-operation "in this urgent vocation" and their good services in procuring a clergyman for their community.

The petition was granted on the following conditions:

First, the clergyman of the Lutheran Body should, previous to his departure to the colony, be presented to the Directors for their approbation and confirmation.

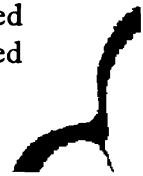
Second, all expenses for the maintenance of ministry and building should be defrayed by the members of the congregation; and in addition they should contribute to the Reformed Church fund equally and in the same proportion as all other inhabitants.

This second stipulation was so rigidly enforced that in the year 1790 the Receiver General was instructed to proceed summarily against the Lutheran Community for arrears of acre-money.

Third, all persons presenting free colored children for baptism were required to sign an engagement that these children should never become a charge to the community or to the public.

This regulation was the cause of converting the Lutheran Community of Berbice into what was aptly called "a mutual benefit society." At present, however, there are only two persons receiving pensions from this community.

It has been suggested by local historians that these hard conditions were made on the part of the authorities because they feared that an unauthorized body would be inclined



to teach the slaves in such a manner as would tend to cause them to revolt from their masters.

We believe, however, that the opposition was the result of the intolerance of the Dutch Reformed Church; for the founders of the Lutheran Community were themselves slave holders, and the Church as an organization owned slaves. The Reformed Church of that day was intolerant whenever in authority, as is instanced in the action of the Dutch Reformed when they were in power in that other New Amsterdam, which is now New York.

It might also be noticed that when the slaves arose in insurrection in 1762, it was Abbensetts of Solitude, one of the founders of this Church, who did the most valiant service on the Berbice River in holding the slaves at bay with a small handful of men. However, it seems fair to conclude that the Lutheran Church had acted kindly towards the slaves, inasmuch as they spared only the properties belonging to this Body when they burned and pillaged Fort Nassau.

Mr. Rodway in his excellent three vol-

umed history of British Guiana says, "It was rumored that the Lutheran Predicant being unable to escape, had barricaded his doors, and tried to reason with the slaves from the window, but they set fire to the house and murdered him as he was coming out." It is evident from our records that this was only a rumor for our records show that the Lutheran buildings were not burned and the Lutheran Predicant was not murdered, but that he fled from the Colony.

The first century of the Berbice Lutheran Community closed as the last resident Dutch Lutheran vacated his pulpit about the year 1843.

The century had been one of continuous struggle and had been filled with great discouragements. The first twenty years had seen three ministers in the Lutheran Church. Of these our simple record states,—"The first and second of our clergymen died shortly after their arrival in the Colony; the third fled the country at the time of the revolt in 1763, without giving notice of his intention."

The necessity of supporting their own and



also the established Church, and the large expense of bringing out clergymen from Holland, who either died or broke their contracts in a short time, and the revolt of the slaves, which left many of the Lutherans in indigent circumstances, made it necessary that a somewhat larger fund be raised and secured for the maintenance of the Establishment.

The Lutherans therefore asked the Court of Policy to grant them one hundred acres to be developed in the interests of the Church. This grant was given, but while it was being surveyed the government showed its hostile attitude by imposing a prohibitive tax upon the same. The idea was abandoned for a time. Afterwards the government gave permission for the tax to be paid in ten annual payments and the work was set forward. The old record says,—"it being the unanimous opinion of the members that with the blessing of God and by good management their undertaking would most likely be crowned with success, the execution of their plan was once more resolved upon."

The record continues,—"One of the



RICE NURSERY



A DRAINAGE CANAL HOKER



A Balata Expedition

members living near the land undertook to lay it out and put it into cultivation gratis, in the carrying out of which labor he was after his death succeeded by a fellow member on the same disinterested principle. The slaves who had been waiting on the last minister were sent to the estate and employed in the cultivation of the soil with others who were hired for the purpose."

While this estate was being established the individual members often had to pay from their own incomes government taxes on the land, poor taxes (from the benefit of which they were excluded), and the regular running of the establishment.

The developing of this estate was the labor of many years, and while this was going on there was no minister to care for these people. In fact, during the first hundred years there were only a few during which the Lutheran Church had the services of a resident minister.

From the date of organization it was nine years before the arrival of the first minister. During these nine years the Lutherans paid in annual subscriptions towards

a fund for bringing out a clergyman and as surety for his support, and they also built a church and a manse. After nine years of sacrifice and anxious waiting the minister came and after laboring for two years died.

The second minister arrived two years afterward and after a pastorate of four years he also died.

The third minister arrived the next year and decamped after a pastorate of two years. There was then a vacancy of four years and the fourth minister arrived and decamped after a two years' pastorate.

It has been impossible for me to ascertain how long a vacancy occurred after this. But it must have been a very long one for the next reference that I have been able to find concerning a Lutheran Minister in Berbice, is that in November 1826 the Lutheran Minister informed the Protector that he was about to begin the instruction of the slaves in the Christian Religion.

It appears that this minister had been in this Colony some time previous to 1826 and that one other minister had been here after the fourth. This sixth minister must have

been the Rev. H. W. P. Junius, the last of the Dutch ministers, who labored here until 1841. Allowing this man a pastorate of twenty years and his immediate predecessor a pastorate of ten years, there still would be a vacancy of thirty years, during which time the funds were raised which made the Lutheran Church to be known as "the rich Church of Berbice."

From the time of the British occupation the work of the Lutheran ministers must have been increasingly difficult, for we are told in contemporary history that the Lutheran minister could understand and speak hardly any English. Nevertheless, the Reverend Junius, during the last eleven years of his pastorate, baptized 794 persons.

During this first century there were less than forty years that this congregation had pastors and over sixty years of vacancies.

The next twenty-five years witnessed a period of deterioration in the Lutheran Community. The congregation came nearly dying out. Most of its members were scattered among the several denominations that had grown up here after the British had ac-

quired the land. Only four male and seven female members remained at the close of this period.

During this period occurred what might be called the Wesleyan Occupation. It contributed to the decay of Lutheranism. The Wesleyans of Berbice certainly owe a great deal to the avarice of the Vestry of the Lutheran Community. They wished to control the large income of the Lutheran Church for their private ends, so rather than seek a minister they invited the Wesleyans into the Church, giving them free use of the church, manse, and school, and setting aside a substantial sum for the support of their minister. Thus the Vestry had services and enjoyed the greater part of the funds of the church.

After having enjoyed their privileges for a quarter of a century, the Wesleyans tried to secure the undisputed control of the Lutheran properties, possibly supposing that possession was nine points of the law. Without going into the disagreeable details of the affair it is enough to say that the matter ended by the Wesleyans being excluded from

the buildings. While the vestry were possibly animated by avarice in inviting the Wesleyans to use their property, nevertheless the Wesleyans owe a debt of gratitude to the Lutheran Community which they are very reluctant to acknowledge.

During this period the greater part of the revenue of the church was made to serve private ends. This went on undisturbed until the year 1875. At this time there was made a distribution of $5,000.00 among the few remaining members. Some considered themselves unfairly dealt with in this distribution and made representations to the Government that the administrators were wasting the funds of the Lutheran Church. At once the Government instituted a Commission of Inquiry. This Commission ordered that the Lutheran Church should be reopened, and that the moneys be put to the use for which they were originally intended, and thus fulfill the objects of the founders.

The vestry, thereupon, invited Rev. John Sanders, minister of the Lutheran Church in Suriname to reinstitute Lutheran services in Berbice. Reverend Sanders came, reopened

the services, confirmed new members, and advised obtaining assistance from some local clergymen to maintain the services.

The Rev. J. R. Mittleholzer was invited to hold these services as recommended by Reverend Sanders. And thus began a relationship between the Lutheran Community and Pastor Mittleholzer that continued for over thirty-five years. For three years Reverend Mittleholzer held the ordinary services, while Reverend Sanders made periodical visits to the Church. Then in 1878 Reverend Mittleholzer was called as the pastor of the Church, he having previously journeyed to Suriname to receive confirmation in the Lutheran Church.

On the 18th of September, 1890, the church and pastor were received into the membership of the East Pennsylvania Synod of the General Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the United States.

The recognition from this body of Lutherans was of great importance to the Berbice Lutherans. It removed from the pastor and congregation that feeling of isolation that had always been theirs. It assured them

of a continuity of a properly qualified ministry, and it helped them in the difficulties with which they were then encompassed. Of this union with the American Lutheran Church Reverend Mittleholzer wrote: "The Lord bless the Synod which came unknowingly but timely to the rescue of this distant but not unimportant branch of the great Lutheran Church. May our Zion flourish to the honor and glory of her Divine Master whose kind and ever-watchful providence has guided her from her commencement, protected her amid crushing dangers and changing scenes, and once more revived and established her! May she ever prove a satisfaction and credit to the venerable Synod with which she is connected."

Up until his death in August, 1913, Reverend Mittleholzer remained the faithful and efficient pastor of the Lutheran Churches. The eleven members of 1875 had now increased to a fine congregation in New Amsterdam. He had also established himself as one of the most successful of the creoles of the Colony. He was the one who introduced the Christian Endeavor Society

into British Guiana. He also conducted a school known as Beneva Academy in which some of the most prominent men of Berbice received their education.

After the death of Pastor Mittleholzer, the Vestry petitioned the East Pennsylvania Synod to send a minister to their church. Finally, in 1914, the Rev. M. H. Stine, Ph.D., D.D., came to the colony to take up the work.

Owing to the long illness of the late pastor and the vacancy caused by his death, the properties of the church had greatly deteriorated, and many of the members and followers had become scattered. Dr. Stine felt unable to take up the burden because of his advanced age and because he saw that, at once, considerable money would be required to meet outstanding debts, carry on the established work, and put the property in proper condition.

After three months he returned to the United States and recommended that the Synod transfer the Church to the Board of Foreign Missions in order that money might be available for the needs of the Community

and that a supply of ministers might be assured. The transfer was accordingly made, and in January, 1916, the writer took charge for the Board.

Some might wonder why after all these years this Church still needs outside help for carrying on its work. I am sure that this brief review of the history of this Church will rather lead one to wonder that there should be any Lutheran work left in this Colony. For a Church to have maintained its existence through the changes that have taken place in this Colony in one hundred and seventy-nine years is no mean accomplishment.

Let us not forget that of the churches founded by the Dutch, only the Berbice Lutheran remains. The Dutch Reformed, State-aided and carefully protected, has passed entirely out of existence, leaving only a dim historical record. But the Lutheran Church, the fruit of sacrifice, toils, and prayers, stands forth today full of hope and courage for the future.

This Church had enemies without and sometimes it had its worst enemies within.

Its large funds offered a great temptation to those who had not toiled for them, and they were cruelly dissipated. And yet God has kept our Church here and his care of her in the past cannot but bring to our hearts the assurance that he will bless her in the future.

We need not wonder that more was not accomplished during the first century. We marvel that anything was left after the Wesleyan Occupation. Under Pastor Mittleholzer a great work was accomplished. The Lutheran Church today is still an influence in Berbice. Our work is moving forward. To many the Lutheran Church may seem both slow and weak, but the wise men observed,—"The race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong."

God accomplishes His purposes slowly,—"One day with the Lord is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." The future we leave in the hands of God who has brought us through one hundred and seventy-nine years. For the past under His providence and Divine blessing we thank Him and praise Him for His loving kindness which endureth forever.

"Soli Deo Gloria" is written over our door.

"Encompassed by seditious foes
Our Zion hath her anguish known,
Still in His name she overthrows
And glory gives to God alone.

Zeal for her Master be her care,
Nor e'er His sacred cause disown,
His lambs like jewels, may she rear
And glory give to God alone."

CHAPTER V.

Our Church in Berbice as It Is Today.

Leaving the past we wish to present to you a picture of the Lutheran Church in Berbice as it now is. We wish you to see our equipment, our people, our plans, and our hopes.

The original building of this congregation was erected at Fort Nassau when that Dutch fort was located fifty miles up the Berbice River. Today that old fort is marked only by some cabbage palms that tower high above a dense forest and by piles of old brick that mingle with the roots of the trees. For it is now considerably over one hundred years since that old fort and town were deserted and New Amsterdam was founded at the River's mouth.

Our Church was moved to the new town and we are very fortunate in having a picture of the new building erected by the Dutch. This building still forms the main part of our Church, after having done ser-

vice for over one hundred and twenty-five years. This building was added to about forty years ago under the pastorate of Reverend Mittleholzer and was repaired and painted under the present pastorate. This building is unique in this Colony in its architecture and presents a very pretty picture, standing as it does surrounded by royal palms. It is valued at about $10,000.00.

In the same yard stands the old Manse. There are timbers in it that have been in use more than a century. However, upon our arrival in the Colony we found the house in what looked more like ruins than a home. The renovation cost a little over $3,000.00, of which amount about half was paid by the Board and half from local funds. Renovated it is a large, cool, and comfortable home, and is valued at about $5,000.00.

This Church and Manse face the Strand, which is the best business street. They are located in about the center of the town. The lot on which they stand extends for a full thousand feet to Main Street. And facing Main Street there are two other buildings belonging to the Church. The larger house

is rented and the smaller one furnishes a home for our East Indian Catechist.

The Church also owns a small piece of land in the town facing Backdam, which is leased as a site for the Anglican East Indian Church. The property of the Church in New Amsterdam is worth nearly $20,000.00.

The Church also has something over a hundred shares in the Royal Bank of Canada. The income is about $1,700.00 a year from the property and funds left in trust by the original founders. Of this amount, $1,200.00 is paid towards pastor's salary, $264.00 is paid in pensions, and the balance for taxes, insurance, and administration. During the World War the bank shares paid extra dividends and the money was utilized for repairs on the Main Street house and for building a fence around the property.

The congregation in New Amsterdam also contributes according to its ability for local expenses. While the congregation is small and the people are mostly poor, yet their generosity is very marked and some of

their sacrifices very commendable. The assistance that the work receives from America is so distributed that it does not in any way destroy the self-reliance of the people. The Board pays for nothing that it is possible for the people to pay for themselves.

Our congregation in New Amsterdam is made up of Blacks, Colored, and East Indians. The blacks are the descendants of the old-time slave population. The colored are those of mixed blood. And the East Indians are from India. There are no people entirely white connected with the congregation, but there are many who could pass for white should they so desire. However, let it be understood that our people are intelligent and cultured and show as fine a type of Christianity as can be found in any place in the world. We are proud of our Lutheran people in British Guiana, and we are sure that you would be, too, did you know them.

Will you not come and spend a Sunday with us? At nine o'clock our first service begins. You will not be able to understand

one word, but you will know that it is beautiful because of the reverent spirit manifested. It is our Hindu service. A hymn is first sung and then our morning service is rendered in Hindu, then an address by the Catechist and prayer and the benediction. It is a small assembly, for work with the East Indian is very slow in this Colony. And yet there is a sweetness and a pathos in those Hindu hymns that you will not soon forget.

We have Hindu temples and Mohammedan mosques all around us, and the Hindu and the Mohammedan have a moral code that is very easy to the natural man, and so we go on slowly, hoping and praying that somehow in God's own time some will be saved. Especially do we long for those bright-eyed boys and girls who are coming somewhat under our care. This is the only work here in New Amsterdam that is financed by our Board. We look for the time when it shall grow into a great work.

At eleven o'clock we have the regular morning worship. Our full service is again used. This time in English just as you have



MOHAMMEDAN PRAYER WALL



MOHAMMEDAN WORSHIPPERS



A Berbice River Scene

it at home. The same sweet songs are sung, the same lessons are read, and the same kind of sermon is preached. The singing is hearty. At first it might sound a little strange to you but you will like the mellowing and softening that you associate with the Jubilee Singers at the home Chautauqua.

There is a special reverence in the worship of these people that would shame many a congregation at home. No one comes to the service who does not begin with a silent prayer and no one leaves without a quiet moment of prayer after the service.

At 2.30 in the afternoon our Sunday school meets. All our Lutheran literature is used and paid for by the offerings of the school. Classes are well taught. The order is exceptionally good, and everything is done with reverence.

After the regular Sunday school, classes are held in the different ends of the town for those poor children who cannot come to the regular school because of "circumstances." "Circumstances" usually means lack of boots, or trousers, or a good dress. A shirt is considered quite enough for at-

tendance at these classes. It is nothing unusual to see little boys on the street with only a shirt, but of course they would feel ashamed to come to school in that alone. When the pastor goes out unexpectedly to visit these classes, there is always a flying of shirt tails and a borrowing of pants that they might return and show how well they have learned their lessons.

At a recent review one little chap asked, as we were about to leave, whether all the prayers had been said. He had come late and had not heard the opening prayer. We told him that prayers had been said but that we would pray again and asked him to pray and any others who might desire. And then several little children not over twelve years of age offered beautiful prayers that they had learned in their class from their teacher. I wonder how many little boys at home would stand up among their fellows and lead in prayer. Two of these boys were East Indians whose parents are heathen.

At seven o'clock we have Vespers. The regular Vesper Service with a sermon. On Monday evening Prayer Meeting. On

Tuesday evening Luther League. On Wednesday evening a mid-week service with Vespers and sermon. So we go on, praying, preaching, teaching. We do not complain that our congregation is small and that results are not always in evidence. We thank God that we have strength to witness for him in this place and among these different peoples, and that he has preserved this Church for nearly two centuries and still gives to her the privilege of proclaiming the unsearchable riches of His Holy Word.

Here in New Amsterdam our congregation numbers about one hundred and sixty, including our little handful of East Indians. Our Sunday school has an average attendance of about one hundred and our outdoor classes have nearly fifty enrolled. It is a little work but we doubt not that with the blessing of God it shall grow through the years and shall be the means of bringing many into the Kingdom.

This work is very much like the work in any Church at home. The only difference is the country, the climate, and the nations represented



CHAPTER VI.

The River Churches as a Mission Field.

We now come to a consideration of what constitutes the real mission field of our Church in British Guiana, the River Churches. Our work in New Amsterdam is that of an old-established and practically self-supporting congregation. Only our East Indian work there is new, and it is, and should be, the logical work of every congregation in this colony. But our river work is in a different class.

While it is true that even here we have no new field, inasmuch as this work has been carried on for about a quarter of a century, yet this work has been undeveloped and must remain so to a certain extent until a minister shall be able to give the majority of his time to this work alone.

The best developed of our River Churches is St. Paul's Mission at Bien Content. There is connected with it a day school known as the Maria Henriette Lutheran School. Here

we found a flourishing congregation and school upon our arrival in the Colony.

We have in this congregation one hundred and twenty-five members, a Sunday school, a Luther League, and a day school with fifty-four children enrolled. The healthy condition of the work is owing a great deal to the zeal and intelligence of the former Catechist, Mr. J. F. Hartman, Sr., who gave over thirty years to the work in this field.

Pastor Mittleholzer had attended to the erection at this place of what is the largest River Church. The school however has only a thatched-roof building. We have recently completed a comfortable Mission House and have thus secured for the first time in six years a decent place for my own accommodation on the River.

At St. Paul's we have a regular Vestry and the congregational life is well developed. During the life of Catechist Hartman, who very recently passed to his reward, the candidate classes were very carefully instructed and all the church services properly conducted, and the people were wisely admon-

ished from Sunday to Sunday. Up to the present time we have been unable to fill the vacancy made by this good man's death.

The people here contribute towards the maintenance of their own church and towards the traveling expenses of the minister when he visits them. In the building of the Mission House they contributed in labor and materials at least six hundred dollars. The balance was paid by our Board.

Upon my arrival in the Colony the Government was contributing $172.00 a year toward the maintenance of our school here. This amount has now been increased to more than $600.00. It is mostly absorbed in increased teachers' salaries. Unfortunately we cannot report that it has stirred the teachers to any greater devotion to their duty or efficiency in their work.

This was our only school in the Colony six years ago. We now have a school at St. Lust and one at Ituni. Both are receiving government grants. The grant for Ituni is $180.00 a year and for St. Lust $150.00. These grants are not sufficient for the schools. Our Board makes up the balance

and also finances the founding of these schools and their expenses until we are able to meet the Government requirements.

At each of our three River Churches we employ a Catechist, who, to the best of his ability, attends to the congregation during the absence of the pastor. We have received the past year from the Government, Bonds amounting to $3,620.00, paying interest at 5 per cent., the income from which is to be used towards paying these Catechists on the River. All additional expenses connected with this work are cared for by the Board, which has also made possible a second Mission House at Ituni. So it is evident that our Church in British Guiana is in a fair financial condition for carrying on its present work in four churches and three schools, with its invested funds, its school grants, its government bonds, and its contributing members. However, there are some very necessary expenses that they are unable to pay. It is necessary that a pastor laboring in this field should have frequent furloughs and opportunities to return home. This is expensive and our funds cannot pay



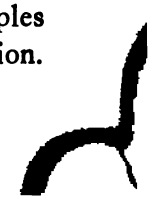
these expenses. It is necessary that our work be extended, and this would be altogether too slow an operation were it necessary to wait for local financing. Another minister is needed in our Church work in order to inaugurate any forward movement, and it would be necessary that he receive his salary from the outside. We need two church buildings on the River, one at St. Lust and one at Ituni. While the people at both places are ready and willing to donate their labor and whatever raw material they might have on their land, they are not able to furnish ready cash for such a venture. We also need a new school house at Maria Henriette that can also be used as a social center. For all these improvements we shall need the help of the home Church. We also need a church in Georgetown, the capital city of the Colony. This is most urgent for our members are constantly going down there to live and we should follow them and care for them. Besides Georgetown is destined to become one of the great cities of South America, and we do not wish to lament another opportunity missed.

CHAPTER VII.

Mount Hermon Mission and the Practice of Obeah.

Mt. Hermon is the name of our River Mission situated at St. Lust. This church is near the intersection of the Weironie and Berbice Rivers and the spot where the first church was erected in Berbice in 1723.

This portion of the River district is very different today than it was two hundred years ago under the Dutch. Then there were fine plantations of coffee, cocoa, and sugar upon the banks of the River. Then there were the fine, large, cool houses of the planters with their true tropical hospitality. Bridle paths joined the different estates and comfortable tent boats passed up and down the river with their crews of black oarsmen. Sugar factories, coffee and cocoa drying houses and quarters for the slaves were everywhere evident, and large well-kept fields of plantains, bananas, and pineapples supplied food for the considerable population.



Now a few thatched-roof huts can be seen sparsely scattered along the river. Crowding down upon them is the dense bush with only a little path leading to the landing. A few sticks of furniture and a canister with a few clothes are all that are to be found in these abodes. A corn field and a rice field cut and planted for one crop and then abandoned, furnish most of the food for the family. Some of the most ambitious make crab oil from the nuts of the crab wood tree, and a few timbers are occasionally squared for the local saw mill. Thus the mixed people of the river, descendants of planter, African and Indian, eke out their living.

It is in such surroundings that our Mt. Hermon Mission is situated. The people lack ambition and the intelligence necessary to make the most out of their circumstances. They need constructive leadership. They are kept back by disease and laziness. To say that their morals are "Polynesian" would be putting it mildly.

Twenty years ago they built brick pillars upon which to place their church. The

church has not yet been erected. When we came to the Colony there was a thatched-roof chapel with its thatch full of tarantulas and other creeping things, and there was no school.

We have not been able to accomplish much here, for who could do much for any church by visiting it three or four times a year for a day or two at a time? However, the chapel was enlarged, a school has been organized and placed on the Government list, a house has been built for the teacher, and a Sunday school has been organized. Our progress has been slow but there at least has been some progress.

It was here at St. Lust that the missionary and his wife had a rather interesting experience about five years ago with tarantulas.

We arrived at St. Lust from St. Paul's Mission on a Sunday afternoon to hold an evening service. The little chapel was packed with people. We had a few oil lamps and the parson's lantern was placed on the pulpit so that he could see to read the Scripture lessons. While he was preaching



there was something about the size of his hand and black and hairy, that dropped from the thatched roof and struck the lantern. One of the members knocked it to the floor and dispatched it with his foot. This was our first sight of a full-sized tarantula.

After the service we killed about half a dozen of those large black fellows that appeared between the roof leaves. After this we got out our folding cots with their mosquito nets, and putting them up in the open chapel, retired. Under the loose floor pigs and goats grunted and snored, and fleas left pig and goat for a cannibalistic diet. However, after some time, we managed to get to sleep.

After a while the missionary awoke. Some strange night sound of the jungle must have penetrated his ear and brought him to consciousness. He lay quietly for a while and thought about those tarantulas, and a story that he had recently read about their poisonous sting killing human beings, when looking out of the corner of his eye he saw something long, black, and hairy within a few inches of his face. He was in a quan-

dary. What should he do? To move might invite a venomous sting. To lie still was but to postpone an uncomfortable situation. It was impossible to jump up and get away, for the mosquito net enclosed everything in the bed. So he decided to strike with his hand and at the same time jump away from the threatening object. You can imagine his surprise and relief when, upon striking, he discovered that the long, black, hairy thing that he had mistaken for the legs of the tarantula was nothing more dangerous than the fringe of a steamer rug that he was using for a covering.

St. Lust is also a great district for the practice of Obeah. Before the law was passed that made it an offence to even be found with any of the paraphernalia of Obeahism, every moonlight night at St. Lust we could hear the drum of the obeah man calling the people to the comfy dance. The hold that obeahism has on the people of the colony is one of the great mysteries and points to the greatest failure of the Church in this place.

I have before said that all the black and

colored people of the colony are nominally Christian. I have had to limit their Christianity because of the hold that obeahism still has upon a large majority of them. One hundred years ago, a minister writing from Demerara to England said: "A species of witchcraft, called Obeah, is very common among the negroes. Its efficacy is attributed to some infernal supernatural agency. For this terrible superstition no other remedy has ever been found but the Christian religion."

There is no doubt that Christianity has cast this devil out of thousands of people, but it is one of the failures of our religion that it has left so much of this superstition in the minds of the people.

The Molly Schultz murder case brought this terrible thing most forcibly to the attention of the Government and suitable laws were made to deal with it.

"Obeah" signifies every pretended assumption of supernatural power or knowledge whatever for fraudulent or illicit purposes, or for gain, or for the injury of any person.

Obeah is generally practiced for the purpose of inflicting disease, loss, damage, personal injury, or to cause or divert affection by use of love philtre or charms. The paraphernalia usually consists of a human skull or some other part of the human body, either taken before or after death.

In the case of Molly Schultz, it was shown that those diabolical demons took the eyes from the child while she was still alive.

The penalty for the practice of Obeah is imprisonment and flogging for men and solitary confinement for women, and still the terrible thing goes on to an alarming degree. It is frightfully demoralizing, and yet people from all sections of the population are under its sway. On the street one day there was pointed out to me the "obeah man" of a prominent Chinese merchant. Many of the blacks and East Indians are in constant fear of obeah. I have known aboriginal Indians to throw away a dispenser's medicine and take their sick for a long journey to an obeah man. And even many of the colored people look upon sickness as the result of the evil eye, and who consider the rags and

bones of the obeah man more destructive than overcrowding and germ-laden mosquitoes. Recently I was told about some colored people who secretly carried a terrible concoction prepared by an obeah man to one of their friends in the hospital. Is it any wonder that the doctor is often mystified in the progress of his patients?

Obeah is the cause of much of the irreligion and immorality of the people, and so far has not given way to the teaching of the schools and churches.

I should be very sorry were what I have said about "obeah" and its influence upon people of all sections of the inhabitants to lead you to the conclusion that the people have made no progress in Christian living. To judge the people by the followers of obeah would be like judging America by the "spiritualists" who have many points of likeness to this relic of African savage superstition.

The black and colored people form the great bulk of the members of the Christian Churches. The fate of Christianity in this colony is in their hands, and I believe that



ITUNI INDIAN SCHOOL



SCHOOL CHILDREN



ITUNI DUG-OUT CANOES



A RIVER STEAMBOAT



TENT BOAT

it is in safe keeping. The black and colored people are practically the Christians of the colony. One of the most pleasing features of the Negro temperament is his tendency towards religion. There are no atheists among the Negroes. They are largely dominated by the Church. They are far more faithful in their duties as Church members than the average European in this colony.

In our Church we have found that they have as thorough an acquaintance with the doctrines of the Church, coupled with the practical application of the same, as can be found any place. Some people, unacquainted with people of other races than their own, assume that the religion of the black and colored is of a superficial character. This is not so. They are as sincere lovers of Christ, as devoted to the Church, and as practical in their Christian living as people of any other race. Of course, like all races, they cannot all be included in the above description. Many of them are nominal Christians, just like many of our people at home. Many have been baptized and confirmed, and with this the matter has simply ended,



just as with many of our people at home.

The black and colored people have taken very kindly to education. Their progress in this has been remarkable. They are keen to educate themselves and their children and make large sacrifices towards this end.

And I believe that they are industrious when well. Much that is taken for idleness, laziness, and thriftlessness is the result of sickness. Give them heathful surroundings, and sufficient food and they can accomplish a great amount of hard work, and they generally are very cheerful about doing it.

Negroes are filling positions of responsibility and honor in this colony and are doing so with distinction. As a race they have made wonderful advances since the abolition of slavery in 1836. Their future and the future of the colony and of the Christian Churches here are but different sides of the same question. I, for one, am very optimistic about all three.

CHAPTER VIII.

The Work Among the Arrawak Indians.

We come now to the presentation of our work among the Arrawak Indians. This ought to be of great interest to our people, as this is the only mission of The United Lutheran Church among the original inhabitants of the American Continent.

The Mission is located on an island formed by the Berbice River, the Ituni Creek and the Itabo (supplementary mouth) of the Ituni. It is situated one hundred and twenty-five miles from our head station in New Amsterdam. There is a semi-weekly river steamer that runs from New Amsterdam to within three miles of this Mission.

The church here is called Mount Carmel and the Mission is known as the Ituni Lutheran Indian Mission.

To visit this Mission we must be up and off at seven A.M., and it is usually after midnight when we arrive at Paradise, the



steamer terminus. From here we go in a batteau for the rest of the journey, and by two A.M., or after a hot journey of nineteen hours, we arrive at our destination.

Up until August, 1921, we had only a small thatched-roof building about 12 x 20, to accommodate the preacher, teacher, catechist, and whoever else might be at the Mission. Here we have also a small thatched-roof building that does service as a chapel and school. But through the kindness of the home Church, and with the assistance of our Indians, we now have a pleasant cottage with two rooms and a gallery for the accommodation of the minister.

The building of this cottage was quite an undertaking. Our Board gave us a generous grant towards this object, but, as I believe in teaching people self-reliance, I would use the money only for those things that the Indians could not supply. So the Indians went into the forest and cut a supply of crabwood logs. It was necessary for them to make roads through the forest from the stumps to the river. Then they dragged the

logs with their own strength over this road. Then the logs were tied into a raft with bush-rope and the raft was floated for more than a hundred miles to the saw mill in town. There the raft was sawn up into one and a quarter inch boards for flooring; groove and tongue and spring boards for siding; and inch boards for roofing. These boards were then loaded into a punt and floated back up the river to the Mission. The river is very accommodating, in that the tides run for nearly one hundred and fifty miles from its mouth, so that not much more time was taken to float the punt up than to float the raft down.

The windows and blinds were made at the mill in town from New York boards and shipped to the Mission. Next we gathered bricks from an old abandoned plantation for the foundation and blocks, sills, beams, and uprights were squared out in the forest and dragged or floated to the Mission.

The plan for the house was drawn by the Missionary. Some carpenters were employed and the house raised. It was a long job but will no doubt well repay the effort

in comfort and convenience for the missionaries during the coming years.

The work and material thus donated by the little handful of men connected with the Mission, amounted to about one-half of the value of the completed house. I am sure that you will conclude that that was not so bad for your aboriginal Indian Lutheran brethren of the South American forests.

I shall never forget my first visit to the Ituni Mission. There were only a few Indians present with their children. The Catechist had brought up a few of the members of St. Paul's Mission to sing a few hymns. The Indians were unable to join in any portion of the service and sat stolid while I tried to bring a message to them from God's Word. The children were strange and shy, and the whole proceedings left me terribly depressed. What was there to do? The Indians could not understand me and I could not understand them, although we were all speaking English. I was sure that I would not be able to learn the Arrawak language along with the care of the four churches, and I was especially concerned about the

bright-eyed, red-skinned children. The problem that this Mission presented was no small one. After prayerful consideration we decided to organize a school for the training of the children that they might learn correct English and the principles of our holy religion.

I wish that you would try to picture those little, shy boys and girls of the tropical forest. They were bright-eyed, lively little children, very lovable and loving, and dear to the heart of the Master. But they knew nothing about the dear Saviour who took little children up in His arms and blessed them. They knew none of the sweet songs that our own little ones learn in Sunday school and church. They could not read, write, sing, pray, or join in children's games. Prejudice would tell us that their condition was their own concern; but Christian love revealed wonderful possibilities and urged us to endeavor in Christ's name to bring the Gospel unto even these little ones.

Finally the day came for the opening of the school. As the hour drew near, an Indian boy stood on the river bank and blew



a hunting horn. As the sound went up and down the river and creeks and echoed through the forest, the little girls eagerly finished the plaiting of their hair; the boys smoothed theirs with oil and hurriedly got in their dugout canoes to hasten to the Mission. Gayly they came, knocking their paddles on the sides of their canoes and chattering to one another in their Indian dialect.

We opened our school with about thirty children, and as the news spread to the "top side of the bush" others came, until fifty children were enrolled. Fifty boys and girls, who before had known only the wild, primitive life of the tropical forest, now began to lay the foundation of their education. They were taught to read and write and reckon. They were taught to pray and sing and play. Their minds were filled full of Bible stories, the greatest of the Psalms, the Beatitudes, and other choice passages of Scripture were engraved upon their hearts.

Now, if you will visit the Mission, you will be delighted with the service. Our full Common Service is used. Every response

is sung by the children. Our creeds are confessed and the quiet tropical forest is made to ring with the triumphant songs of our beloved Zion.

After our school had been running about a year, I went to examine those who were reported ready for promotion to the second standard. In examining the children in reading we discovered that they had committed their entire first reader and could recite as well without the book as with it. While this was not according to the best rules of pedagogics, yet it revealed that these little children had wonderful memories, so what better could we do than to fill those ready minds with the Word of God, the confessions of the Church, and the beautiful hymns of the people of God. Many of the children can give a large number of the hymns from the first word to the last without any reference to the book.

In this way we have made little missionaries of many of them. Sometimes their parents come down to the Mission and call their children to go with them into the bush upon some kind of an expedition. The child



takes its hammock, its cooking pot, its cassava bread and bunch of plantains, and getting into the canoe is off for hunting and fishing, on a balata bleeding trip, or to one of the timber grants, and wherever it goes it carries the Word of God, the confessions of the Church, and the Hymns of Zion. For these children are taught to pray daily and sing and confess their Saviour; and often their words are heard in the innermost recesses of the forest and among people who have never before heard the Gospel message. As they explain their words in the dialect of the tribes, Christ is made known. As a black man once said after he had unexpectedly heard one of our children singing far from the Mission, and after he had been for many months far away from civilization, "It was too (very) sweet to hear the songs of the Church in the top (distant) side of the bush."

It is a sweet thought to know that little children who knew not their blessed Saviour and perchance might never have known Him, are now this day singing hymns of praise to His blessed name in that tropical forest,

because our Church has carried the Gospel message to them.

A permanent church building is to be erected at this Mission. The old thatched-roof chapel will be used then for school purposes only, and this much needed place of worship will give a certain required stability to our work.

CHAPTER IX.

The Native Indians.

The aboriginal Indians of British Guiana are civilized if by civilized you mean polite. It would be hard indeed to find any of these forest people who are unpleasant or savage. If you mean polished according to the white man's ideas, and encumbered with a superfluity of clothes, then you would not always consider them civilized. Indeed, the full dress of some of our interior Indians is made up of a small bead apron and various strings of beads. However, the Indian woman is generally quite as modest in her demeanor as her more highly polished and much more dressed white sister. Indian women do not wear European clothes gracefully. Should there be designed for them such clothes as the Girl Scouts wear, they would be beautifully appropriate. It would not overmuch please the class of merchants who make a business of selling to the poor aboriginal women high-heeled slippers and

ill-fitting garments when they come to town.

It is often pathetic to see how the aboriginal Indian under the guidance of a certain class of tradesmen rig themselves out for their festive occasions. I have seen poor, unhappy brides, who had always known the perfect freedom of a primitive life, brought to the altar by their admiring friends in the breathless embrace of their first corsets and with their feet crowded into a pair of satin slippers several sizes too small for them. How they would perspire under their bridal veils, and sometimes they would sensibly slip off their shoes while the service was being read.

Unfortunately our teachers and catechists encourage them in these things and the stage is all set and the paraphernalia purchased before the parson's advice is sought. Now that we finally have a small Mission House at Ituni we trust that the Missionary's wife will be able to institute certain dress reforms on behalf of the Indian women.

The Indians live as they have lived for centuries, except where they have been touched by European civilization, and even

this civilization has not materially changed their existence. Where our so-called civilization goes, there are always two influences at work—the one of the trader and the other of the Church. One pulls in one direction and the other exerts its influence in the opposite direction.

It is contended that civilization always affects the aboriginal in a deleterious manner. And this is always true if civilization is represented by the rum shop and the trader. I have heard the rum shop keeper and the trader contend that it is the missions that thus hurt the Indian. I have known a man high in the councils of the State, a man knighted by the King, to contend that missions exploit the Indians, and who was opposed to any kind of missionary activity in their behalf. Such men are only concerned in shifting responsibility for the evil influence of our so-called civilization.

Missions are always planted in order to bring the best of our achievements to the life of a people. Missions and missionaries are the best friends of primitive peoples. By their influence the complete annihilation of

these peoples is prevented. As a missionary we are concerned about the Indian, and anxious that he may be helped to make the most out of his condition. We preach the gospel to him; we supervise the education of children; we try to teach him hygiene and sanitation, and minister to his physical as well as mental and spiritual welfare. And then, when the rum shop undermines his constitution and he dies, we are accounted his slayer. If he learns tricks from the trader and applies his education secured in mission schools to obtain his just dues, the trader claims that the missionaries have taught him tricks and spoiled his primitive simplicity which was always so pleasing, picturesque, and profitable to the trader.

The missionaries desire that the aboriginal Indian may live a beautiful, simple life. We wish him to have the simple precepts of Christianity in place of a demoralizing and degrading superstition such as he would have without Christ. We wish him to be honest in his dealings with his fellowmen, but we also desire that he be able to protect himself in business and secure a fair

deal. We wish him to live a long and healthy life by observing God-given laws of body and mind; we do not desire to see him wrecked and ruined by a rummy civilization.

We not only do not exploit him, but at a great personal sacrifice put ourselves in the position of servant and teach him and minister unto him, and become indeed his brother, endeavoring to help him in this life and prepare him for a blessed immortality.

In certain fundamentals the Indian is living today as he lived for centuries. When Columbus was cruising on his first voyage among the Bahama Islands, he found the people living a very primitive life, and most of those primitive conditions still prevail in this land.

The houses were thatched with palm leaves and open on all four sides, with a sort of a loft which gave little privacy to home life. It is just in such houses that our Indians now live, and a thatched-roof house is without doubt the best sort of a house for him to live in. I understand that the government, recognizing this, requires the Indian to live in such a house in order to be



ST. PAUL'S CONFIRMATION CLASS



EAST INDIAN CATECHIST FAMILY



A ST. LUST WEDDING



INDIANS GOING TO CHURCH



ITUNI MISSION RIVER SCENE



ITUNI MISSION HOUSE

eligible for certain special privileges granted to aboriginals. I think that there should be certain improvements in these houses. They should be larger than they usually are and separate sections should be constructed for the different sexes after they come to a certain age. In Washington Irving's "Voyages of Columbus" we read, "For beds they had nets of cotton extended from two posts, which they called Hamacs." And to this present time the aboriginal Indians of this land woo Morpheus in their hammocks of cotton. And so great is the convenience and comfort found in these hammocks that many Europeans prefer to swing in them even when a large comfortable bed is available.

The invention of the hammock was a great achievement for the aboriginal Indian, and it would indeed be interesting to know the different stages through which the industry passed until it reached its present perfection.

The aboriginal Indian is also primitive in his mode of travel. He still uses a dugout or a bark canoe and displays considerable ingenuity in the modeling of both the boat

and the paddles. Three models of paddles have come under our observation and it is possible to know the part of the Colony from which our Indian hails by observing the cut of his paddle. The paddle of the Berbice and Demerara and Essequito districts are each of a distinct pattern.

Not only does the Indian still live in his palm-roofed pavilion, sleep in his cotton hammock, and ride in his dugout canoe, satisfied with the simple adornments that nature has given to the human body, but he still eats the same food, prepared in the same manner. Corn and cassava are his main articles of diet along with tropical fruits. Of these articles of diet cassava bread is the most interesting and complicated in its process of preparation.

There are two kinds of cassava, bitter and sweet. Both of these are tubers resembling our sweet potato in shape but sometimes attaining great size. The sweet cassava can be utilized in its natural condition and upon cooking or baking is ready for consumption. On the other hand should you thus prepare bitter cassava, it would be

found a rank poison, for the bitter cassava contains a fluid that eaten in conjunction with the fibre is poisonous, but both fluid and fibre are edible when separated. After, no doubt, thousands had lost their lives by experimentation, the Indian discovered, ages ago, a process whereby the cassarep could be extracted from the cassava. This is the process of preparation.

The bitter cassava is brought from the fields in baskets carried on the backs of the Indians, and supported with a thong passed over the forehead. The tubers are then pared and grated. The grated casava is then placed in a matapee and the juice is extracted. This juice is then used as cassarep and is utilized in the preparation of pepper-pot. The pulp is then spread out in thin layers on the stove and baked. This is the cassava bread and the staff of life for the aboriginal Indian.

The Indian also makes various kinds of drinks. Cassiri is made from the sweet potato and piauarri is made from cassava bread. The first is non-intoxicating but the second is filthy in its manufacture and disas-

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trous in its effect upon the consumer. When the Indian is preparing for a piauarri spree the women are called together. Large quantities of cassava bread are made; a canoe is pulled ashore; the women surround it and chew vast quantities of cassava bread which they spit into the canoe. When this concoction ferments it is used as an intoxicating beverage and the piauarri spree is on. It takes the form of a degraded debauch with disastrous effects upon the morals and physical constitution of the Indians.

The Indians should be encouraged to continue the industries that they have developed through the ages. Weaving hammocks and baskets, planting their fields, hunting and fishing, have been to a great measure supplanted by balata bleeding and timber squaring in the employ of traders to the detriment of the Indian and the profit of the trader. The Indian now often has to buy his matapee and hammock and canoe, and has lost his skill with bow and arrow. In all this he is the loser, because he has become dependent upon others than himself for his simple needs that he should himself be able

to supply with his own unaided efforts.

Rum is the weakness and the curse of the aboriginal Indian. The government has laws for his protection but they are impossible of execution, and the trader plays on the weakness of the Indian for his own profit. There is no work too hard for the Indian if his reward is to be rum. When all other inducements fail, this is sure.

The rum dealer will tell you that piauarri is responsible for more injury to the Indian than rum, but I cannot believe this. For a piauarri spree requires hard preparation and the consumption of large quantities of the Indian's available food supply, while rum is often procurable upon credit and is far more potent in its effect. The preservation of these primitive people is a serious problem and must be worked out by the Christian Missions. We must aim to conserve all that is good of the Indian's past and to add to that all of the good of our own civilization that is adaptable to his requirements, and warn him from the evil that is always attendant upon the invasion of other races into his natural domain.

CHAPTER X.

SNAKES—INSECTS, ANIMALS AND BIRDS.

People generally think of South America as the land of snakes. Our old geographies always twined numerous serpents around the caption for South America. It is true that snakes are very numerous in Hammock Land. To St. Patrick is given the credit for driving the snakes out of Ireland. However, we are told that there are no snakes in Scotland and only one harmless variety in England. The old enmity between the serpent and man gives the victory to man where his kind is numerous. But in Hammock Land there are less than three men to the square mile and this is not enough to rid the land of snakes. However, one could spend months in Hammock Land on the coast lands and see no snakes outside of the excellent museum in Georgetown. But there are many snakes in the land. Bright, green and yellow parrot snakes, poisonous rattlers, labarri and bush masters, huge water commodies and

yellow tails help to make up the list. Many of the natives will not call them snakes because of superstition, but call them long-man, yellow-man, or green-man. Some East Indians refuse to kill a snake believing that at night the spirit of the snake will haunt them.

It is said that the water commodies of this Colony sometimes attain a length of thirty-five feet, but I am afraid they look longer than they really are when seen in the bush, and even when the skin is shown in proof it cannot be taken too literally as the skin is often stretched in removing it from the body. However, they do attain great size and wonderful stories are told about them. Men who often visit the interior tell about snakes large enough to swallow deer and large calves. They say that the snakes contract around their prey and break up their bones into a pulp and then find little difficulty in swallowing very large animals.

Recently I saw in the newspaper an account of an attack of a water commodie on a man who was about to bathe in an interior creek. The man was standing at the water

side cooling off before his swim when a huge commodie rapidly coiled around him and began to contract. His cries brought his partner with his large bush knife in time to hack the snake in two and save the man's life.

Recently I saw also another account of two snakes of this kind in the London Zoo. One was eleven feet long and the other nine. Two fowls were thrown to these commodies for food. The larger one seized the smaller fowl and swallowed it at once. Then noticing the larger fowl still in the mouth of the smaller snake, it seized both the fowl and the smaller snake and swallowed both of them. It was explained that the fangs of this snake are so constructed that when it closes on anything there is no way to get it out of its mouth but by swallowing it, and that it was possible for it to swallow the smaller snake but the process took several days.

When we cleared the ground for our Mission House at Ituni, two large labarries were killed. Many of these snakes have been killed around this Mission and we are very

thankful that we have escaped these venomous vipers upon our visits to this place. One day our two little boys were picking up awaras under an awara tree at this Mission and a few minutes after they left the spot a large labarri was killed there.

After we had killed the two serpents in clearing for our Mission House I went over and sat on a bench under a cokerrit tree, when glancing sideways I noticed a long, green snake coiled around the tree with its head a few inches from my face. We hastily dispatched this fellow and saw no more snakes on that trip.

While a snake bite might result disastrously there is every probability that one would live very long in Hammock Land without experiencing such a misfortune; but there are pests that you cannot so readily escape. Mosquitoes, sandflies, jiggers, tick, bete rouge, ants, wasps, and sundry other insects help to relieve the monotony of life before one has traveled far or tarried long in Hammock Land. I have been rather unfortunate with wasps, but the most painful bite that I ever received in all my

travels was from a large black ant.

One day as I was just in the act of sitting down in a canoe, a large black ant nipped me at the base of my thumb. The thumb and forefinger swelled very large, back as far as the wrist, and throbbed with pain for several hours. Although this happened five years ago the mark of this bite still remains.

Ants seem to be everywhere present in the tropics. There are wood ants that will devour houses if they are not constantly watched. They will eat out the timbers of a house and the boards, leaving only a shell. They can do a great damage in a very short time, working silently, incessantly, and in great numbers.

Among the most interesting ants that we have noticed in Hammock Land are the "cooshie" ants, known also as the leaf-cutting or parasol ants. These ants are the most dangerous enemies to vegetation in the Colony. They cut off pieces of leaves of various trees which they carry back to their nests, held upright in their jaws. They march along regular tracks which they clear from the nests to the tree they attack. These

tracks are sometimes twelve inches wide and are swept clear of every bit of vegetation. They march along these tracks in two streams going in opposite directions, the one going to the nests, each bearing a piece of leaf, and the other returning from the nest for more. Not only leaves, but also pieces of flowers, fruits and seeds are taken back to their nests. They have been observed to go as far as half a mile from their nests for leaves.

There was a large troublesome nest of these ants just behind our school at Ituni. The nest was about twenty feet in diameter. The ants not only stripped the trees at the Mission but stripped the stalks of everything planted in the school garden with the exception of the bananas. Finally we decided to destroy this nest. So one day we secured some shovels and with the help of the children we puddled the nest. The nest was situated near the creek and was made up of a series of tunnels and dome-shaped chambers with probably fifty openings to the surface. These tunnels were so constructed that they all led into one that served as a

drain and came out on the bank of the creek.

First we stopped up the drain; then we made a ditch around the nest and filled it with water. Next we filled a tub with water and placed it about the center of the nest. One man stood in this tub and shoveled the earth while the children carried water and threw it on the nest, thus making a mud, stopping up the holes and killing the ants in the puddle. It was a half day's job for three men and about twenty children, but there were few ants escaped.

Another time we tried shooting a nest with an explosive acid but the results were not satisfactory.

These ants carry the leaves to their nests but they do not eat them. Inside the nests the leaves are cut up very fine and kneaded with the feet and jaws, forming a yellowish brown spongy substance. On this substance a fungus grows. This fungus constitutes their food. One particular fungus is carefully looked after and cultivated and all other kinds are prevented from growing. So carefully and skillfully is this carried out that the ants have been able to produce a

new growth in the fungus, as different as many of our cultivated fruits and vegetables are from their original wild forms.

It has been discovered that each of the female ants, which may be seen issuing from the nest at certain times of the year, carries in a cavity at the back of her mouth a pellet consisting of filaments of this fungus, with which she is able to establish a fresh fungus garden when she starts making a new nest.

Mosquitoes are the most dangerous pest found in Hammock Land. Their stings are very distressing and their germ-carrying propensities make them the greatest enemy of the human race in the Colony. Abolish the mosquito and the malaria and Hammock Land would indeed be a wonderful place.

Our first night in the Colony brought the mosquito to our attention as we crawled under the net over our beds, and I have not been able in six years to get a night's rest out from under a mosquito net, whether in Georgetown, New Amsterdam or up the Berbice River.

Upon our second day in the Colony the

mosquitoes forced themselves upon our attention by swarming into the cars as we pursued our journey to Berbice.

We landed in New Amsterdam while that ancient town was suffering from one of its periodical mosquito invasions. As we sat at the table they swarmed around our legs and stung our ankles. As we walked the streets it was necessary for us to carry long dry grass bushes to drive them from our heads and necks. As we went to church we were under the necessity of smearing every exposed portion of the body with citronella oil, and even then constantly brush them from our faces. Mosquito brushes went swish, swish, swish, throughout the congregation, during hymns, prayers, and sermon, and the only rest for the weary and aching body was to be found in the bed and under the net.

In Berbice we have invasion after invasion of these pests. Millions come down upon the district. Laborers are often literally driven from the fields and there is no peace from the pests even in the homes of the people. Even the well-to-do people do

not screen but depend on smoke-pots for relief during these invasions. The great bulk of the population have not even nets for their beds, and how they live through the times of this scourge is beyond my comprehension.

The inconvenience caused by the mosquitoes is painful and severe, although people in time become somewhat accustomed to them and many people are able to sleep without nets and would try to persuade you that in their portion of the city or their district in the country there are no mosquitoes. However, there have been mosquitoes enough to keep me awake all night in every portion of the colony that I have visited during six years, if I was deprived of a mosquito net.

The painful inconvenience of mosquitoes is not the worst phase of this question. But the mosquito carries disease and practically the whole colony suffers from malaria carried by the anopheles.

For the first two years that I lived in Hammock Land I suffered almost constantly with malaria and took enormous doses of

quinine. After these two years I had a better house with several screened rooms, had learned a certain degree of discretion and had become acclimated. While my early experiences were rather distressing, yet after six years I am persuaded that with a good screened house, care about sterilized water, and reasonable precautions concerning activities during the heat of the day, one can have a very pleasant and safe sojourn in the Land of the Hammock.

This is not the only land that has mosquitoes in super-abundance. I have seen them in swarms of millions on the prairies of Dakota and in the swamps of Ohio. But it is a land where the least precaution is taken against the mosquito by rich and poor. Let this be corrected and I am sure that the death rate of the colony will be materially reduced.

Among the larger animals we have the jaguar, which is often erroneously called a tiger, the deer, alligators, manattee or water cows, wild pigs, and tapirs.

The tapirs are called maipouri by the Indians and are good forest hunting and



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good eating. One time one of our Indians brought me some meat and told me that it was bush cow. I found out finally that it was tapir. The tapir is nocturnal in its habits and keeps to the dense forests, avoiding all open places. It commences to feed in the evening and continues to seek food all night. Tapir are sometimes seen at the water side early in the morning. Their mode of life is in many respects similar to that of swine. For instance, they like to wallow in the mud, when surprised utter a loud snort, and, while generally perfectly harmless, yet a mother when deprived of her young will sometimes attack even a person, rushing upon her enemies and after knocking them over, trample upon them and bite them after the manner of wild swine. However, in their more solitary habits they present a closer resemblance to their cousins, the rhinoceros.

The method employed by the Indians in hunting both tapir and deer is the same. Dogs are put on their tracks. The Indians wait at the waterside, for both deer and tapir soon take to the water to throw the

dogs off their scent. Then they are quickly overtaken by the men in their canoes or woodskins who dispatch the tapir either with hunting knife or club. However, it is generally the custom to seize the deer by the horns and hold its head under the water until it is drowned.

Many monkeys are found in Hammock Land. One of the most interesting ones is the Red Howler monkey, locally erroneously called a baboon. Charles Waterton states that nothing can sound more dreadful than the nocturnal howlings of this red monkey. He says, "Whilst lying in your hammock amid these gloomy and immeasurable wilds, you hear him howling at intervals from 11 o'clock at night till daybreak. You would suppose that half the wild beasts of the forest were collecting for the work of carnage. Now it is the tremendous roar of the jaguar as he springs upon his prey; now it changes to his terrible and deep-toned growlings, as he is pressed on all sides by superior force; and now you hear his last dying groan beneath a mortal wound. Some naturalists have supposed that these awful

sounds, which you would fancy are those of enraged and dying wild beasts, proceed from a number of red monkeys howling in concert. Yet one of them alone is capable of producing all of these sounds.

Once I was fortunate enough to smuggle myself under the very tree, on the higher branches of which was perched a full-grown red monkey. I saw his huge mouth open and the protuberance on his inflated throat. I listened with astonishment to sounds which might have originated in the infernal regions.

The birds of Hammock Land are also strange and wonderful. The kiskadee is the most obtrusive and its distribution is so general that it might be well called the sparrow of the colony. But there are wonderful parrots and parroquets with their variegated colors, macaws with tints of gorgeous blue and red and yellow adorning their plumage; wonderfully tiny humming birds; and toucans with their gaudy plumage and ungainly appearance, with bills as large almost as their bodies, currie-curries with their brilliant red, egrets with their tempting plumage, water hens and spur wings, all

very common. And then in the interior the rare Cock of the Rock, with his orange-colored plumage and flat-sided crest, courts the dull olive brown female with his graceful dance. This bird is much prized for its plumage, for the Indians use its feathers for their fancy headdress and other decorations. From the feathers of this bird was made the large state mantle formerly worn by the Emperor. Their skins were required as tribute from certain sections.

We have in Berbice a bird that naturalists have declared to be the most ancient bird in existence. It is locally called the Canje Pheasant because its habitat is along the Canje Creek. It is also found along the Berbice River. It is the hoatzin or the hoactzin. Its plumage is olivaceous and its head is crested. Its young have spurs on the tips of their wings which they use to climb trees, and when young it is also able to swim and dive in the water. However, when full-grown it is a crested pheasant. It lives on the leaves of the mucca-mucca which grows in the mud along the banks of the Canje Creek and the Berbice River.

CHAPTER XI.

Some Experiences in Visiting Our River Missions.

We would like to give you an idea of some of our experiences in making our trips to our River Missions.

A trip to the River Missions during the dry season is not so bad. Aside from the fact that the forward deck of the river steamer is then too hot for comfort because of the smoke stack, and the after deck is too hot because of its low deck and lack of breeze, and the steamer fare is too hot with pepper-pot and curry, there are few inconveniences.

But a trip during the wet season! Well, that is another matter. Although the steamer may have just been in dry-dock, the roof leaks like a sieve. The floor is wet. The only chairs that have not become water containers are those occupied by passengers. The curtains are all down at the sides and the place is insufferably hot. Overhead lowering, water-soaked clouds, and under-

neath a dirty and water-soaked deck.

But at the end of the journey comes the fitting climax. You feel sure that it is clearing up as you near your destination and get your luggage together. Tin canisters with clothing and bedding, a canvas bag with a folding canvas cot, boxes with provisions, make up the lot. Then, there is bread that came from the bakery just as the boat left. Why was it not packed in a tin box? There it is wrapped only in newspapers.

The boat whistles for your Mission, and as though that tiny shrill whistle had power to disturb the elements, the rain comes now in torrents. Little dug-out canoes shoot out from the shore to unload you in midstream. Already they are half-full of water but a boy in each is bailing out with a calabash almost as fast as the storm is refilling them.

You wait until your canisters, bed and provisions are deposited and then with raincoat and umbrella you step in. Ah, well! If feet must get wet, degrees of wetness make little difference. You still have your umbrella and raincoat and they, you hope, will keep your bread dry. But, alas, the umbrella

simply changes the large drops into somewhat smaller ones, while your raincoat, guaranteed in Harrisburg, Pa., to turn any storm, soaks up the tropical rain like a sponge. Soon everything is soaked and you are nearing the shore. One hundred yards yet to go and the rain stops, the sun comes out and nature smiles. She smiles at her little joke about your landing.

Safe in the Mission House you hurriedly unpack. Your week's supply of bread is wet. The wet portion is cut off and thrown away. Yes, the bed would have been dry had not the open end of the bag been plunged into the water in the boat. The canisters let no water in at the top but the bottom of one had been sprung and plenty of water entered that way. Oh, well, no great harm is done. You are safe. The rain has stopped and the sun quickly dries all that the rain has soaked and night finds you quite comfortable under your mosquito net.

As one travels up and down the Berbice River there are two things that grow upon him. The first is an ever increasing appreciation of the beauty of that tropical stream,

while the second is a knowledge of the vileness of degraded man. Neither the beauty nor the vileness are at first so evident. Both are revealed only upon close acquaintance. My first trip to the Missions did not reveal much beauty; the discomforts were so great that they overshadowed everything else. The steamer was slow. The deck was hot. The green clad banks seemed monotonous. Animal life was scarcely evident. A few hoactzin screeched among the mucca-mucca, protesting our passage, while a few parrots went shrieking overhead. It was all oppressively hot and tedious.

And even after we were ashore it was very tiresome. We attempted to penetrate the bush a little from the river bank but were soon covered with beatrouch and so tormented with mosquitoes and sand flies that we were forced to return. During our entire stay of ten days we suffered constantly with insects.

But before we had taken many trips we learned to guard against the different pests. Animal life began to be revealed to our more accustomed eyes. Now a deer would

be surprised sleeping in the forest shade, tracks of tapir would be found at the watering places, cries of tigers became familiar to our ears. Snakes were seen basking in the sun or hurrying to shelter as we walked along. Baboons howled at us as intruders from the water side. Sweet-singing and bright-plumed birds appeared as by magic. Myriads of radiant butterflies tempted us to amateur lepidoptery. Delicate fragrances lured us to the discovery of flowers and fruits, or a splash of gold revealed wonderful orchids.

The different seasons began to show different splendors, when at first there seemed to be one season for the whole year. Seed time and harvest finally became significant.

The night sounds of the tropical jungle began to reveal their language and the story of the night often drove the sleep from the tired eyes and kept one alert until the dawn as often a good book does.

The quick drawing of the curtains of the night, the glory of the tropical moon, the radiant burst of the morning light, all of these spoke of the lavish kindness with which

the gifts of God were strewn upon that quiet-flowing dark brown river in that tropical land. All these things appeared upon close acquaintance like charms and graces revealed only in the circle of beloved friendship or in the sacred precincts of the home. An intimate knowledge of this country makes one exclaim:

> "With lavish kindness
> The gifts of God are strown."

How often have we thought "And only man is vile," a hackneyed expression, yet along with the revelation of the beauty of the place, there came also an increasingly vivid revelation of the depravity of many of the people who share this forest home with the timid deer, the sneaking tiger, the sluggish sloth, the happy birds, and the jabbering monkeys.

At first all the people seemed normal. They came to Church properly dressed. They listened to the sermons with attention. They were respectful in their attitude. They seemed to be sincerely anxious to lead truly Christian lives. Many of them were found upon close acquaintance to be truly sincere

and noble people of God. But so many still believe in and fear the obeah man; so many live lives of immorality unashamed; so many children are illegitimate; so many acts of brutality are committed unrebuked that the old time Mission Hymn still applies to this country with force and truth, and sadly we must say that for many it is:

"In vain with lavish kindness
The gifts of God are strown."

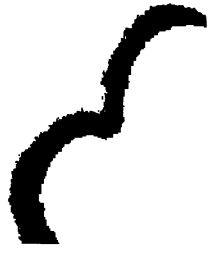


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